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MONDAY, MAY 2, 1870.

THE TARIFF BILL.

An interesting discussion of the tariff question occurred in the House of Representatives on Saturday. It abounded, however, rather with piquant personalities than with any new arguments on the vital issues affected. The main point at issue was the attempt of some of the free-traders to abandon the present bill and to substitute therefor a short enactment which would reduce the duty on sugar, molasses, tea, coffee, salt, and iron. In their eagerness to strike a vital blow at the great staple of Pennsylvania these gentlemen seem to be willing to retain, for the present, heavy duties on all other domestic manufactures, but their scheme was instantly checked by its prompt exposure, and the House by a vote of 96 to 24 decided to continue their labors upon the bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means. The task undertaken by that committee is so gigantic that we shall not be at all astonished if its best efforts to thoroughly revise the tariff at the present session prove abortive. It is next to impossible, except at times when an irresistible partisan pressure is applied, to force a comprehensive new tariff bill through both branches of Congress at any given session. Nor is such legislation, as a rule, desirable. One member, in opposing the abandonment of the Schenck bill on Saturday, said that if it was given up such a surrender would be a confession that the House had not capacity enough to understand it in detail; and such we fear is the fact, whether it is acknowledged or not. It is entirely beyond the power of any body of two hundred and fifty men to act promptly and intelligently in the regulation of the duties upon every known article of commerce, and members who learn merely the names of all the things imported rank in knowledge above the average of their colleagues. As several thousand distinct items must come up for debate and consideration, we do not wonder that, after two months' discussion, comparatively little progress has been made. Mr. Schenck is laboring with indefatigable zeal, hopefulness, and industry, and he will avert the fate he dreads of having his bill "kicked to death by grasshoppers" if human energy can ensure success. In the end, however, a short cut to reduced taxation may still become necessary, and what Pennsylvania has most to dread is that in this summary proceeding the line of operations suggested by the free-traders on Saturday may yet be adopted. There is no good reason why the iron interests should be singled out as the special target of the foes of protection, but they are evidently inspired by a hope that, through a combination between railway projectors, free-traders and simple, and the Democrats as a party, they will be able to cripple if not to destroy this vitally important branch of domestic industry. Should they succeed, even in a moderate degree, incalculable injury will be inflicted upon the people of this State. Any man who travels over it, who stops to consider from what sources the revenues of its citizens are derived, who inquires what sustains its leading cities and towns, and what makes its mighty mineral districts teem with life and activity, can see at a glance that a withdrawal of protection would well-nigh prove a death-blow to Pennsylvania. Her citizens can bear as well as the people of any other section a moderate amount of tinkering at the tariff, but if, by any neglect of her representatives, or any triumph of her enemies at Washington, the old-time supremacy of the hostile iron interests of Great Britain is restored, the Keystone State will be clothed in sackcloth and ashes, and become the veritable Cinderella of the American Union. On one occasion during the present session the duty on iron in the bill under discussion was materially reduced on account of the absence of a number of the members from this Commonwealth. Now since the free-traders have avowed a disposition to concentrate their forces against our staple, it will require but very little more neglect to ensure their triumph, and it behooves every true champion of the State to be on the alert. Let our members and Senators see that no short cut to reduced taxation shall be made over the mangled body of Pennsylvania, and let them be very sure that they will be always present and voting when questions affecting the fortunes and the daily bread of hundreds of thousands of their fellow-citizens come up for consideration.

THE NEW SOUTHERN RAID.

The recent attempt in the House of Representatives to obtain a recognition of the claims of so-called Southern loyalists for property destroyed during the war, has been followed up by a speech in the Senate in favor of this fatal policy, which was delivered by Mr. Pratt, of Indiana. It was announced some time ago that this gentleman felt so well assured of his unfitness for his present position that he intended to resign, and since this last demonstration we hope he will execute this intention at the earliest possible moment. The real meaning of his speech is that hundreds, ay, thousands, of millions of dollars shall be unnecessarily, unwisely, unjustly, and ruinously added to the burdens of the most patriotic and heavily-taxed people on earth, and that these vast sums shall be shared by gangs of mean and ravenous Washington claim sharks, by corrupt Congressmen, and by citizens of the South whose

vener of loyalty is so thin that if they are scratched anywhere a Rebel coating is immediately disclosed. In the light of past events this proposition is the most infamous that was ever presented in a legislative body. If the whole South were sold at ten times its intrinsic value, the sum realized would not compensate Northern fathers, brothers, mothers, wives, and sisters for the loss of the lives of the dear kindred who were slain in the war. The North must suffer this great loss, however, in silence. She must bear the brunt of the burden of the debt, too, for the necessary national expenditures in the Rebel regions have scarcely been equalled, since the war, by the revenues they have yielded. Her States, counties, cities, and towns must still groan beneath the pressure of local war loans. And yet heartless schemers are constantly endeavoring to make frightful additions to these burdens in the interest of those who, if not directly responsible for all our national calamities, are at least inextricably intermingled with the immediate authors and promoters of the Rebellion. Year after year the proposition to pay the Southern war claims seems to gain strength, in spite of its preposterous character. It will not be astonishing if this demand presently assumes a sectional shape, and if the entire Southern delegations unite in urging it, in which event the chief change in their mission, as compared with the olden times, will be a resolve to virtually enslave all the white tax-payers of the North instead of an effort to perpetuate and extend negro slavery in the South. To ensure this end no pains will be spared to win the support of Northern members to the Southern raid upon the Treasury. And the people of the loyal States can find safety only in a resolute and prompt determination to brand with opprobrium every man, high or low, who lends himself to this conspiracy against their welfare and prosperity. Let no voter think that we are giving expression to idle fears. Claim agents and lobbyists always abound at the national capital. It swarms with adventurers of every grade, who spend their lives in inventing and promoting schemes to pick the pockets of the people. They are ever ready to influence the weak, to buy the corrupt, to persuade the merciful, to ridicule the true and honest men of the nation, and they will leave no art untried to consummate that most profitable and pernicious of all schemes which is involved in the proposition to pay the claims of Southern loyalists. One of the objects of the motions and speeches made during the present session is to test public sentiment, and to ascertain the views of Northern tax-payers in regard to the proposed new burden. The people should, therefore, not hesitate to declare, in the most emphatic terms, their unconquerable aversion to the new load. They should scan, with the closest scrutiny, the records and dispositions of the candidates for renomination and reelection, and trust no one whose integrity and judgment are not proof against the strongest appeals of the advocates of these dangerous claims. The announcement that the Senate Committee on Claims will make a report in favor of this huge claim-swindle should be productive of increased caution on the part of the people in the approaching contests over seats in the next Congress.

THE PUBLIC BATHS.

For a number of years past we have urged the importance of ample bathing facilities during the summer months for the accommodation of those who are unprovided with bath-tubs in their houses, and who are unable to travel off to the sea-shore during the hot weather. Not only the comfort but the health of the laboring population would be greatly promoted if an opportunity were offered for a good plunge into the water every evening when the labors of the day are over, and lying, as Philadelphia does, between two large rivers, there should be no difficulty whatever in providing all the bathing facilities that may be required. The houses of this city are better supplied with water than perhaps those of any other place in the world, but very many, and perhaps a large majority, are totally unprovided with bathing accommodations. The laboring men who work all day out in the hot and dusty streets, and who more than any others need ample opportunities for bathing, are the ones who are most stinted for water in their homes. The exigencies of modern civilization prohibit public bathing on the river fronts, and a large portion of the population are thus cut off from a gratification to which they are fairly entitled. If the city prohibits public bathing, it ought certainly to provide some accommodations for those who suffer by the prohibition. In Boston, New York, and other cities public baths have been in operation for several years with much success, and we are glad to see that a practical movement for a similar accommodation to the public has been started in this city, through the able efforts, of Mr. H. Huhn. Common Council at its last meeting appropriated \$15,000 for the erection of public bath-houses, and it is to be hoped that the Select Branch will give its prompt concurrence, so that the baths may be put in operation immediately. Very simple and inexpensive structures will answer every purpose, and the sum named above ought to be ample, for the present at least, if it is properly managed. The bath-houses do not require to be very ornate, and it is only necessary that they shall be strongly put together, and so arranged that they will hide the bathers from the public gaze. The erection of a series of these bath-houses, which any one may be at liberty to use at any time, will do more to promote the health of the city and to abolish disease than almost any measure that could be tried, and the sum of \$15,000 expended for such an object will be one of the cheapest investments ever made by the city. This important matter has been delayed too long already, and another hot season ought not to find us unprovided with such a salutary auxiliary as a series of public bath-houses will be.

THE WATER-MAIN CONTRACT.

A LETTER, addressed by Bushong & Brothers, brokers, of Reading, to Frederick Graeff, Esq., the Chief Engineer of the Philadelphia Water Works, has been published. It contains the charge that a bid for supplying the city with certain water-mains, made in good faith by Messrs. Mellert & Kinsey, manufacturers, of Reading, was set aside, and the contract given to a higher bidder. This letter states that by sealed proposals, filed the 19th of April, the above-named firm offered to furnish all the cast-iron water-mains advertised for by the Chief Engineer of the Water Department of Philadelphia at the rate of two and one-half cents per pound. Messrs. Mellert & Kinsey received blanks at the Chief Engineer's office, which were filled up according to instructions and bond filed as required. To their surprise they found, a few days ago, that the contract had been awarded to other parties at one-half per cent. more than their bid. Messrs. Bushong Brothers state that they are considerable property owners in Philadelphia, and therefore heavy tax-payers; consequently they have a right to know the why and wherefore of this affair. They hint very plainly that some underhand influences were at work, and they publish their letter to Mr. Graeff for the information of the public and because they were unable to obtain any information from him, as he returned their communication to them without comment. If the Chief Engineer had any good reasons for declining this bid the public ought to know what they were, for unless good reasons can be adduced for not accepting the lowest bid in a case of this kind, the insinuations of foul play made by Bushong & Brothers will find ample credence. The Chief Engineer owes it to himself and to the city to explain this matter, for one-half cent per pound on our water-mains is a very serious matter, that ought not to be allowed to go unquestioned when a serious doubt is thrown on the fairness of the contract.

BE ON HAND.—To-night the Republicans of the city will meet at their various ward headquarters for the purpose of electing the officers of the regular ward associations. As this is the initiative step as to what is to be done at the primary elections which come off in June, it would be well that our citizens who are intent on reform in the representative men of the party, be on hand.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

For additional Special Notices see the Inside Pages.

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BRANCH OFFICE, CONTINENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMPANY.

A meeting of the Stockholders of the Continental Improvement Company will be held in the Branch Office of the Company, in the city of Pittsburgh, corner of PENN and TENTH Streets, on THURSDAY, May 17, at 12 o'clock, noon, for the purpose of electing a Board of Directors to serve for the current year, and until their successors are duly elected and qualified. And also for the purpose of considering and acting upon the provisions of the Supplement to the Charter of said Company, approved Twenty-fourth day of March, 1870.

W. B. SHELBY, Secretary.

NOTICE.—A SPECIAL MEETING OF the Stockholders of the PHILADELPHIA, GERMANTOWN, AND NORRISTOWN RAILROAD COMPANY will be held in Room No. 24, PHILADELPHIA EXCHANGE, on THURSDAY, the 9th day of June next, at 10 o'clock M., for the consideration of an act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled "An act to authorize the Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad Company to increase its Capital Stock," approved the 29th day of March, 1870. By order of the Board of Managers. A. E. DOUGHERTY, Secretary.

FUEL SAVINGS SOCIETY OF THE CITY AND LIBERTIES OF PHILADELPHIA.—The Forty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at No. 147 N. TENTH Street, on THURSDAY (Tuesday), 2d inst., at 5 1/2 o'clock P. M. Election of Officers.

By order of the Managers. B. W. BENSLEY, Secretary.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION OF the twenty-four Managers of the PENNSYLVANIA BIBLE SOCIETY will be held at the Bible House, corner of SEVENTH and WALNUT Streets, on WEDNESDAY, May 4, 1870, at 5 o'clock P. M.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NEWBURY HOME ASSOCIATION will be held at the Home, No. 915 LOCUST Street, on THURSDAY, May 6, at 4 o'clock P. M. The Officers and Managers for the ensuing year will be elected at this meeting. KNOX LEWIS, Secretary.

THE PHILADELPHIA NATIONAL BANK. Philadelphia, April 30, 1870. The Directors have this day declared a Dividend of SEVEN PER CENT. for the last six months, clear of taxes, payable on demand. B. B. OMEGYS, Cashier.

C. SAUNDERS' COLLEGE, W. PHILA. Lectures, MONDAY EVENINGS, 4 1/2 to 6 1/2.

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